

# Skagit River stewardship

People working together in the Skagit and Nooksack River Systems have helped create a powerful network of stewardship over the past few years. Along the Skagit River the Forest Service has chosen to work in partnership with the multitude of agencies and organizations concerned with issues that affect the river. In this way stewardship of the river system is a shared responsibility. Education and outreach programs, conducted with a network of partners, are a cornerstone of Skagit Wild and Scenic River management.

The Skagit Wild and Scenic River System consists of 158.5 miles of the Skagit River and three of its tributaries, the Sauk, Suiattle and Cascade Rivers. These clean, rushing waters provide a healthy home to all five species of pacific salmon, as well as two species of trout. Nearly 300 species of wildlife populate the area, including black-tailed deer, bald eagle, black bear and osprey.

The Skagit is the largest watershed in Puget Sound. It flows south from British Columbia, originating in glaciers of high peaks in the North



Wintering populations of bald eagles attract visitors to the banks of the Skagit River.

Cascades range. Meandering on through forests and the Ross Lake National Recreation Area, it skirts the communities of Marblemount, Rockport and Concrete, and finally empties into Puget Sound beyond Mount Vernon.

During winter months, when hundreds of bald eagles migrate to the area to feed on spawning salmon, volunteers help staff Eagle Watcher sites along the Skagit River. Urban youth from Seattle's International Housing District Alliance have joined this effort the past few years by assisting with staffing and field trips. Visitors are welcome to tour facilities at the Marblemount Hatchery to learn about salmon and their life cycle.

In the Nooksack River drainage, the Forest Service works with the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA) to educate the public about fish, fish habitat, and ways to minimize impacts on fish while recreating on and near the rivers. NSEA organizes a cadre of student interns and volunteers to provide environmental education for public and private groups such as area school and youth organizations and others who may have questions, concerns or interest in the fish of the Nooksack River.

Through these collective efforts, stewards are able to help protect river resources by maintaining a presence along or near the waterways and by providing informal education on site. If you are interested in attending a program or having a presentation at your facility, you may contact the Forest Service or NSEA through their website at [www.n-sea.org](http://www.n-sea.org).

Rafting the Skagit River.

## New Interpretive Center planned for Skagit River

FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS, local organizers of the Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival have dreamed of a new center along the Skagit River that would be a place to discover the character of the watershed, its heritage and peoples, and the area's plants and animals.

Although the Skagit River Bald Eagle Awareness Team (SRBEAT) strives to make a pleasant experience for those viewing the hundreds of bald eagles that converge each winter in the Upper Skagit River watershed, they also understand the values of the river are a year-round interest.

Skagit County Parks and Recreation made the first step in this cooperative project by donating a building site in Howard Miller Steelhead Park. Additional funds are now needed for a new building design. In the meantime the former park ranger residence at the county park will serve as the interim center.

Check with the Park and Forest headquarters in Sedro-Woolley about the variety of programs highlighting the Skagit River's ecosystems, the area's intriguing history and guided nature walks that may be offered this year. More information about the new Interpretive Center and the Bald Eagle Festival is available online. [www.skagiteagle.org](http://www.skagiteagle.org)



## Thanks Partners!

*The National Forest and Park Service work in a collaborative fashion with a variety of groups and private individuals devoted to the care of our natural resources. By working together and combining efforts, these networks create a community of shared concerns.*

### NORTH CASCADES INSTITUTE

North Cascades Institute offers a variety of hands-on programs, including Mountain School, a residential program for elementary, junior and high-school students from various school districts in western Washington. Other programs include summer youth adventures, family getaways, adult seminars and retreats, graduate studies and volunteer stewardship opportunities.

For more information about classes and programs visit [www.ncascades.org](http://www.ncascades.org)  
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Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284-1239  
Phone: (360) 856-5700 ext. 209  
E-mail: [nci@ncascades.org](mailto:nci@ncascades.org)

### Washington's National Park Fund

Every year millions of people visit Washington state's spectacular national parks: Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic. Since 1993, Washington's National Park Fund has connected people to parks and inspired contributions of time, talent and money. The Fund helps ensure that visitors have high quality, memorable experiences by sponsoring educational, trail and wildlife projects. By securing funding from individuals, corporations, foundations and businesses, the Fund supports park restoration, enhancement and preservation. For information about how you can help Washington's national parks, call (206) 770-0627 or visit [www.wnspf.org](http://www.wnspf.org).



### Northwest Interpretive Association



The Northwest Interpretive Association is a nonprofit organization that works cooperatively with public agencies throughout the

Northwest to promote historical, scientific and educational activities. Money received through local sales, memberships and donations is used to help both North Cascades National Park and the Mt. Baker Ranger District. The association publishes this newspaper and other guides. Sales items may be purchased at various offices, online and through mail order. Visit [www.nwpubliclands.org](http://www.nwpubliclands.org) or call (360) 856-5700 ext. 291.

### National Forest Foundation

Would you like to help maintain your public lands for future generations? Partners are encouraged to work with the Forest Service through the National Forest Foundation, a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to building relationships that result in improvements in our national forests and the communities and landscapes that surround them. Find out more about the foundation at [www.natlfoundation.org](http://www.natlfoundation.org).